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HOW TO DEVELOP THE WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP

Shanghai Tien-li Kung-ssu Mou-lao Fa-tien-chi Ta Chien-shih Chai-ti Chai Hsien
Kung-tso Ching-yen (Some Experiences in Examining an American Electric Gener-
ating Plant of the Shanghai Electric Power Company), Shanghai, Sep 1951

Description of Older Workers

Older workers have a wealth of technical experience and knowledge. In this shop there are 65 workers; 38 of whom have more than 20 years' experience, and one worker has been on the job for 51 years. These older workers are specialists, such as filers, drillers, and makers, etc. Their prior ability is recognized by everyone.

These older workers have a greater political understanding, and have the proper attitude toward American, British, and Japanese imperialism. They are also aware of the bitter struggle that had to be waged by the American Army and the KMT reactionaries. During the past 20 years, they took an active part in the historic revolutionary struggle and always had confidence in the objectives of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party).

The activities and positions of older workers was still not fully developed. They continually increased their political activity, and were held in high regard by the masses. But after the liberation the Shanghai Power Company found that not enough attention or concern was given to their specialities and general knowledge. Thus full advantage was not made of their knowledge, although they had many good ideas. They would say: "We are old and have no teeth, they now want young people who can talk and jump. We only bow our heads. No one is concerned with our ideas."

Establishing a Correct Attitude

Last year a preliminary conference of workers from this shop and responsible comrades from the labor union convened to discuss and improve conditions to the older workers. Many constructive points were raised regarding the relationship of older workers to production and labor union activities. The interest shown by everyone foretold a closer relation between the older workers and the cadre. These conferences with older workers coincided with the Resist-America, Aid Korea Campaign. Propaganda committees, groups of activity groups were located in all shops. They aimed at the abolition of imperialism and the crimes of the bandit Chiang Kai-shek. These ideas inspired the workers' production, enhanced the labor union, and placed more confidence on the older workers who form the backbone of the work shop crews.

Developing the Usefulness of Older Workers

Use the accusation method in order to arouse their class consciousness. During the Resist American, Aid Korea Campaign, all organizations will use this method. Their slogan is: "Think of the past. Know the present. Recognize American imperialism as the enemy of the working class. To resist America is the duty of everyone." This will develop a fraternal spirit of mutual help, improve production, and will influence their youthful fellow workers.

STAT

Respect the affairs and deliberations of the older workers. While examining this electric generator plant, the leaders were instructed to invite the older workers to participate in the party organizations and conference discussions. Such support strengthened the leadership, and provided the answers to difficult problems. At the same time, the cadres increased their propaganda and instruction activities among the masses. The role played by older workers in helping to complete a project within the allotted time is a good example of the contributions they can make. They recognized that an assigned project could not be completed in the required 7 weeks, and suggested that both day and night crews be assigned to the task. Completion of this project on time was then guaranteed. The masses still did not believe the job could be done on time. Older Worker Ts'ao Chih-fang suggested that only the strongest and most skilled workers should help them. This caused the masses to have confidence in the technical ability and experience of the older workers and enabled success in this project.

The promotion of older workers and their participation in leadership activities should also be considered. At the time this electric generating plant was being examined, five older workers were elected to labor-union offices. Also, five older workers had been promoted to positions that enabled them to participate in production conferences. In this capacity their positive attitudes and abilities were developed. In five successive production conferences, they made 35 important proposals for increasing production. After Yuan A-lai was elected leader of a labor-union team, he went to every member before a conference to assure himself that all would attend. In this way he exhibited a positive attitude.

Attention should be given to the political studies of older workers. After the consciousness of the workers is developed, it is essential that political and cultural discussions be held. After Hsin Yuan-t'ing became a labor-union team leader, he feared his low cultural level would affect his work activities. He purchased a fountain pen and notebook to record his cultural studies. Worker Ts'ao-chih-fang attended a night school run by the Public Business Party Committee. He had to walk to class and return home late in the evening. He did not know how to take notes, so he had to memorize the material. He understood the revolutionary principles and the events of the past several decades that were discussed by the teacher because he had seen them and knew every sentence to be true. He was soon able to read labor newspapers. Consequently, after he repaired an electric generator, he wrote a report to the party branch of this electric generator plant and asked to join the CCP. Therefore, CCP leaders should organize activities for incoming elderly workers. Attention should be given to their livelihood and ways of increasing their political and cultural levels. They should be assisted in their activities so that the CCP will have strong and dependable members.

It is necessary to give attention to the workers' health and to help them solve their everyday problems. For example, the wife of Elderly Worker Hsin Yuan-t'ing was pregnant. He had the responsibility of his wife and other members of his large family but had no money. The labor-union emergency fund had already loaned him money three times and according to regulations could not make another loan. The labor-union chairman, Yang Yu-ken, saw this difficulty and assisted him with a loan of 1,500,000 yuan. He also made arrangements for the wife to be taken to the Hu-tung Hospital. Hsin Yuan-t'ing was very grateful for this and said, "We only have the Communist Party and the labor union to help us during periods of suffering and enable us to solve our problems. The Communist Party and the labor union saved my life. I am now going to work extra hard to repay them." The assistance extended by the labor union solved his daily living problems, greatly developed his class consciousness, and strengthened his positive attitude.

STAT

Developing the Strength of Older Workers

Because the leaders of the Shanghai Electric Company have been giving attention to the activities and usefulness of older workers, the X number generator was inspected and repaired 10 days ahead of schedule. Moreover, the quality of the work was very good and the workers acted with determination. For example, at the time they were working on the yeh-tzu (generator brush) (efficiency on this part of the project determined whether or not they would be able to finish on time), Ts'ao Chih-fang and Ch'en Yun-sh'ing took the lead and filed seven pieces in one hour. Formerly, only two to five pieces were filed in one hour. This stimulated the other workers and enabled the yeh-tzu to be finished ahead of schedule. Also, when the lang-p'u team was working on it building their leader became ill and asked for a leave of absence. The project was then without a responsible leader. Yuan A-lai then courageously shouldered the burden, relying on his past 20 years experience in leading other workers. As a result, the work was finished on time.

At this time the older workers became the positive elements against a counter-revolutionary movement. For example, after Counterrevolutionary Ch'en X was arrested in this shop, there was a small number of workers who had been deceived by him and could not understand why he was arrested. Older Worker Hsin Yuan-t'ing held a conference and exposed the hypocrisy and deceit of Ch'en X. He said: "At a labor team conference I once said that subversives are the enemy of everyone because we are all dependent on this plant for our livelihood but the subversives want to destroy the machinery. If they were successful we could not eat, therefore they cannot be tolerated. At this point Ch'en X said: 'What you say is true, but we don't want to just talk about it, let's seize them.' This so and so, he himself was subversive and he said he wanted me to seize them. You see how they cannot be trusted." Everyone applauded and many men got up and accused Ch'en X of crimes. This clarified the issue for those few workers who had been guilty of doubtful thinking.

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